



# **Special Education Programs & Resources Guide for Families**

School Year 2020-2021

# Letter from the Division of Specialized Instruction

Dear DCPS Families,

This guide is an overview of special education processes and programs in DCPS, and we see it as an important part of our open communication with you. Here, you will find valuable information about the programs, processes and points of contact that are a regular part of our work together. You will also see an overview of changes as a result of our shift to virtual learning.

In DCPS, we are committed to:

- Collaborating with parents to ensure that IEP supports and services are provided through virtual learning.
- Continuing plans for academic and social emotional development, ensuring that students with disabilities have equitable access to joyful and relevant learning experiences.
- Clarifying the processes and opportunities that remain constant for students and families, even in a virtual environment.

We heard from many parents of children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans that distance learning was challenging for each child and sometimes the entire family. DCPS is increasing communication with families through our DCPS Parent Universities, with the community through our DCPS website, and with staff through direct technical assistance—as a result of your engagement and feedback. We have worked with schools to provide more structure and guidance to each child's day. In addition, we are making sure that our related service providers are prepared to offer individualized and inclusive services.

Thank you for working with us through these unprecedented times. We look forward to continued engagement and commit to you a school year that focuses on relationships, access, achievement and wellness.

Sincerely,



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Senior Deputy Chief, Division of Specialized Instruction  
District of Columbia Public School

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## School Year 20-21 Shifts Due to Virtual Learning

### What does and does not change as a result of virtual learning?

DCPS will continue to provide supports and services to students with disabilities during virtual learning. We will continue to find children eligible for IEP supports and services, conduct assessments and evaluations and provide regular progress reports. Special education teachers and related service providers will continue to provide instruction and intervention, and implement each child's IEP.

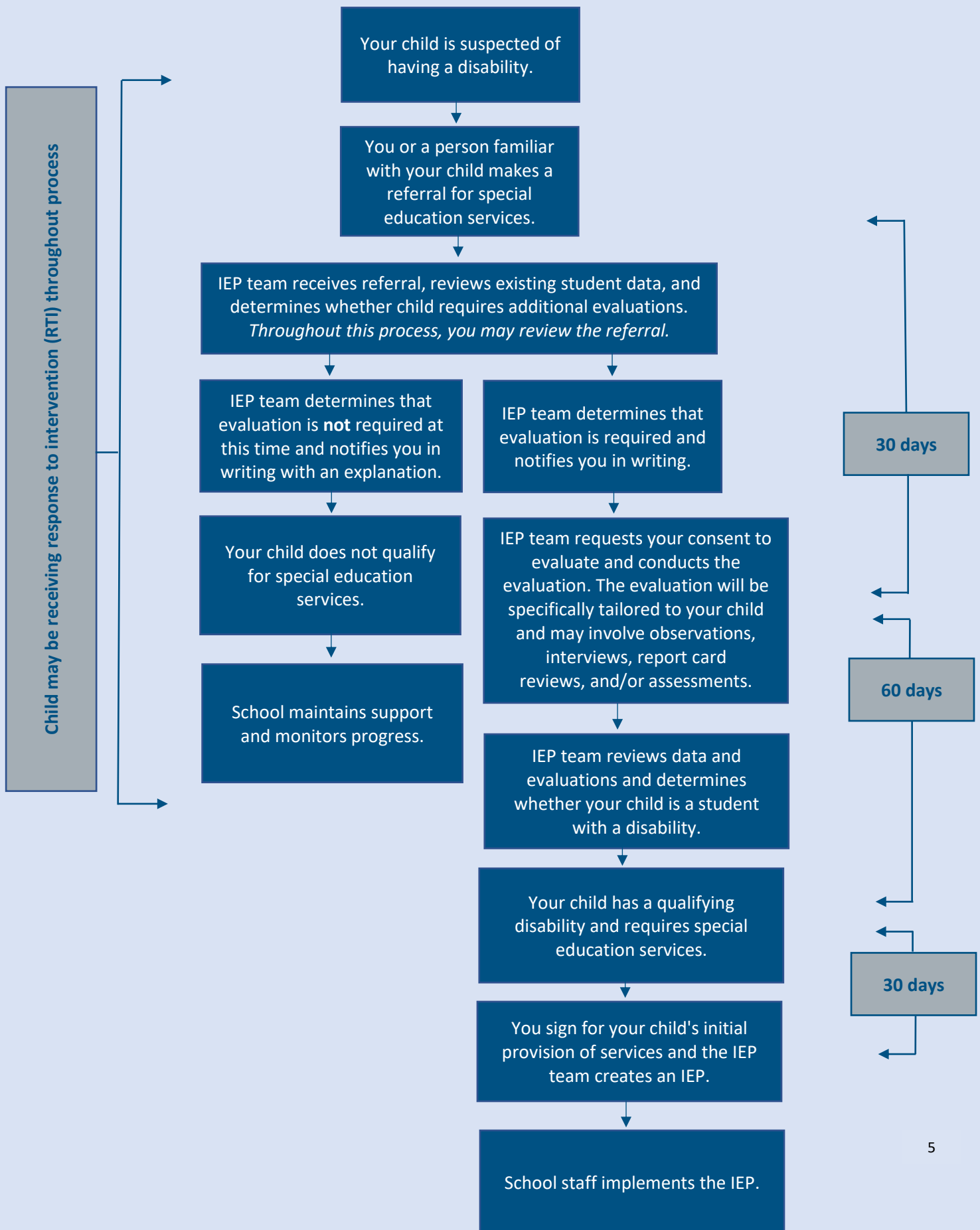
### Key Shifts During our 100% Virtual Learning Period:

IEP Meetings	Meetings will occur virtually rather than in-person. While schools will be assigned a primary day for special education meetings during this timeframe, federal and local law require schools to take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP team meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate. These steps include (1) notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend, (2) allowing parents to raise any concerns about the proposed date and time, and then (3) scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.
IEP Assessments	Some assessments will take place virtually rather than in-person; assessments which cannot be completed virtually will be completed as soon as health conditions permit. IEP teams will review and discuss your child's data which may include classroom observations, teacher report and student portfolio work to determine if an assessment is warranted. If an assessment is needed, the DCPS IEP team members will determine which assessments are required to ascertain if your child is eligible for special education instruction and services. The IEP team members will complete the assessments at no cost to the parent or family. The written assessment results will be provided to the family.
Daily Instruction	Canvas on-line platform is where classes begin and attendance is taken. Students will have more live instruction, with whole and small groups, as well as recorded sessions. Online lessons and materials will include accommodations and modifications.
Secondary Transition Program Participation	Meetings will occur virtually, with students receiving pre-employment transition services online with their Workforce Development Coordinator or Job Placement Specialist.
Referrals to Adult Disability Services (DDS & RSA)	Referrals will take place virtually with students and families completing the application electronically.

### What additional supports can I expect during virtual instruction periods?

Each student will have an individualized distance learning plan developed in collaboration with families and teachers or case managers. Students will have individual learning devices to support instruction. Parents will have on-going training and technical assistance in supporting students with virtual learning. Teachers will have additional instructional resources, professional development, and technical support. Central office staff will be available to collaborate with and support families with virtual learning.

# Special Education Process at a Glance





The special education process starts once a person familiar with the child submits a referral or makes a verbal request for special education services. Examples of who may submit a referral can include parents/guardians, teachers, psychologists, other school staff members, day care center employees, and physicians. The **IEP (Individualized Education Program)** team meets to discuss the referral and analyze existing data, including any previous assessments. The IEP team includes the parent/guardian, the child (if appropriate), special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, and/or other key members of the school staff.

If there is enough data, the IEP team may proceed to determine whether the child is eligible for special education services. If not, they may recommend additional assessments and reconvene for the eligibility determination meeting. IEP assessments are provided at no cost to the parent or family. If the child is found eligible for special education services as a child with a disability, the IEP team discusses a plan of action and creates an IEP.

The IEP is a document that outlines the annual educational goals for the child, as well as the instructional and related services required to meet those goals. The IEP will indicate whether these services should be delivered inside or outside of general education, as well as the accommodations and modifications needed.

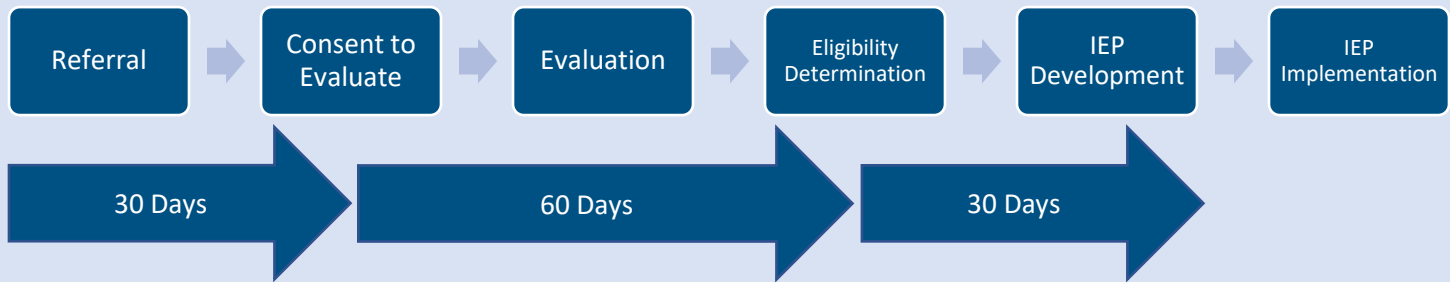
**There are no changes to the IEP process as a result of virtual learning. Events that comprise the IEP process will be virtual rather than in person. There may be delays in completing some assessments in the virtual model with collaboration from parents. [Refer to OSSE's July 2020 IDEA, Part B Provision of FAPE Guidance.](#)**



As the guardian of your child, you are a very important member of the IEP team. Accordingly, the Special Education Student Rights Act of 2014 requires your child's school to send you any relevant documents that will be discussed at an IEP or eligibility meeting at least 5 business days prior to the date of the meeting. This is to ensure you have time to review and prepare for the meeting. Under the same law, you may expect a copy of the draft IEP will be sent to you within 5 business days after the meeting has taken place. In addition, federal and local law require schools to take steps to ensure that one or both parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP team meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate. These steps include (1) notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend, (2) allowing parents to raise any concerns about the proposed date and time, and then (3) scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed on time and place.

DCPS makes every effort to provide special education services in each student's attending or neighborhood school. When this is not possible, DCPS assigns the student to a new location of service that is closest to the student's home and is able to implement the IEP with fidelity. The Special Education Student Rights Act of 2014 also allows parents or their designees to visit their child's current or proposed classroom. If you would like to appoint a designee to observe your child, the school will provide you with an Observation Designee Form to do so. Due to current health conditions, school visits and observations will be unavailable until further notice.

# Who should I contact if I think my child needs special education services?



In DCPS, referrals for special education services are made to the following teams:

**Early Stages** ([referral@earlystagesdc.org](mailto:referral@earlystagesdc.org) or **(202) 698-8037**) - manages referrals for children ages 3 through 5 enrolled in DC private or religious schools as well as children who are not yet enrolled in school.

**DCPS Neighborhood Schools** ([profiles.dcps.dc.gov](http://profiles.dcps.dc.gov) for school contact information) - students ages 3 through 21 enrolled in DCPS are referred through their attending school.

**Centralized IEP Support** ([dcps.childfind@dc.gov](mailto:dcps.childfind@dc.gov) or **(202) 442-5475**) - The Centralized IEP Support Unit manages referrals for children ages 5 years 10 months to 21 years old who are parentally placed and funded at a private or religious school and fall in one of the following categories:

- Are attending a private or religious school in DC, whether the family resides in DC or not;
- Are attending a private or religious school in another state and the family resides in DC; or
- Are being home schooled in DC

In the process of evaluation students for special education services, the Centralized IEP Unit requests the following information:

- Referral Form
- Universal Health Form
- Proof of enrollment at a private or religious school in DC (usually a letter from the school)
- DC residency verification (DC residents only, to be completed after other documents are received)
- Additional suggested documents:
  - Attendance records
  - Report cards
  - Standardized test scores
  - Work Samples
  - Prior evaluations (if applicable)

**There are no changes to the points of contact as a result of virtual learning. Events that comprise the IEP process will be virtual rather than in person. Some assessments may be delayed. [Refer to OSSE's July 2020 IDEA, Part B Provision of FAPE Guidance.](#)**

# Early Stages

Contact: [referral@earlystagesdc.org](mailto:referral@earlystagesdc.org) (for referral) or [info@earlystagesdc.org](mailto:info@earlystagesdc.org) (for general questions)

According to IDEA, a school district must identify, locate, and evaluate all 3- to 5-year-old children who may have a disability. Early Stages works with children in private or religious schools, childcare centers, and children who are not yet enrolled in school. In addition, Early Stages manages Part C transition, the process that determines whether children receiving early intervention services before age three through the Office of the State Superintendent of Education's (OSSE's) Strong Start program are eligible for special education services in school on or after age three.

Early Stages has two evaluation sites:

- Walker-Jones Education Campus, 1125 New Jersey Avenue, NW
- Department of Employment Services, 4058 Minnesota Avenue, NE



## Main Activities

Early Stages offers developmental screenings, manages referrals, conducts evaluations, holds eligibility meetings, develops IEPs and identifies locations for eligible children to receive their services. Each student referred for a full evaluation is assigned an evaluation team. This team is made up of a family care coordinator, who supports the family through the process, and an evaluation coordinator, who organizes the evaluations and the development of an IEP. Together with other specialists, this team completes an evaluation and provides parents with a better understanding of their child's needs. Together with the parent, the team determines whether the child is eligible for special education and related services. If so, the team develops an IEP.

## Service Delivery

All IEP services are provided at DCPS schools by DCPS staff. Eligible children who are not already enrolled in a DCPS school are offered a seat either at their neighborhood school or through a lottery placement. If the neighborhood school is unavailable or does not have a program that meets the child needs, then a seat will be offered at the closest appropriate school that can meet his or her needs. Children already enrolled in a community-based Head Start program may also be eligible to have their IEPs implemented there. Children whose families prefer enrollment in private or religious schools will receive equitable services through an Individualized Services Plan (ISP) instead of an IEP.



During periods of school and office building closure due to COVID-19:

Early Stages will be able to:

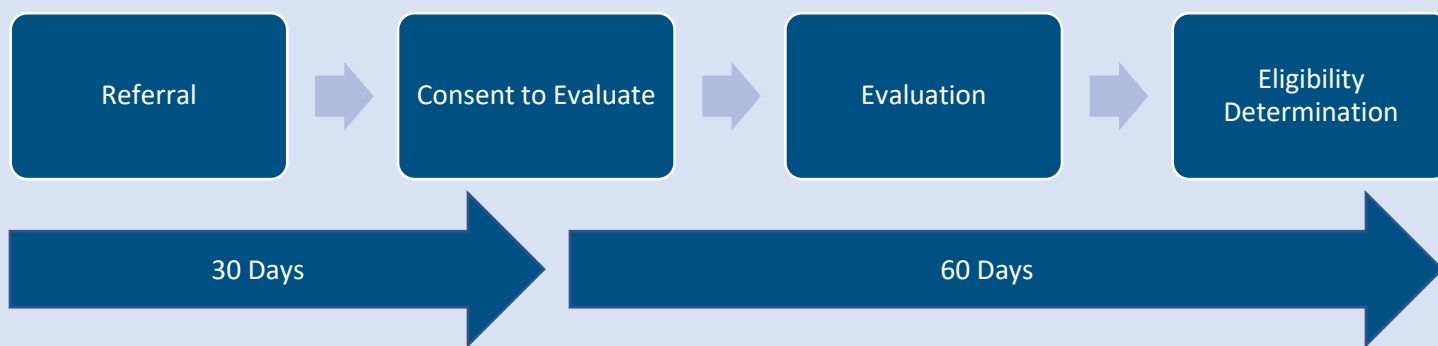
- take referrals and complete developmental screenings.
- participate in transition meetings with Strong Start.
- gather evaluation data that does not require in-person contact via teleconference or phone.
- hold all eligibility, IEP and ISP meetings via teleconference or phone.
- deliver presentations and professional development sessions for parents and community members virtually.

Early Stages will not be able to:

- complete evaluations that require in-person contact. These will be completed when the centers are approved to reopen. An Early Stages staff member will reach out to you to coordinate scheduling when this is possible.

## What should I expect during the eligibility process?

If your child is suspected of having a disability, and your child's IEP team determines that an evaluation is required, the team goes through the eligibility process. As of July 1st, 2018, DCPS is required to complete the eligibility process within 60 days of obtaining your consent to evaluate your child. This section describes important parts of the process, information you can use to be an informed member of the team, and supports are in place for your child.



### What should I look for in an eligibility report?

When reviewing the eligibility determination report, start by reading the conclusion of the document. The summary of the document may also help you gain a general understanding of what will be discussed at the meeting. The report will also include assessment data and the resources available to support your child.

### How is eligibility for special education services determined?

The IEP team, which includes you as the parent/guardian, determines your child's eligibility for special education services. The team will review a variety of resources that will include, but are not limited to: current work samples, student's response to current/previous interventions, teacher and parent reports, evaluation reports (which include formal and informal assessment measures), review of the student's record, and student's current level of functioning in the educational environment.

Once all this information is collected and reviewed during the eligibility meeting, the team utilizes the Eligibility Determination Worksheet to determine if the student meets the requirements to receive special education services.

### What assessments were used and why? How do I interpret the scores?

Assessments can be formal or informal. Each assessment should address the area of concern identified in the referral process, as well as look at your student's overall ability in each area. Scores are interpreted by the provider and/or teacher based on the assessment's manual instructions.

Each formal assessment includes a rubric that determines your child's score. In the reports, the assessors will share this information and clearly state how your child did with each assessment. These can be standard or scaled scores, or descriptions of the student's performance, depending on the assessment. The assessors will let the team know the ranges of these scores and how the scores compare to typical peers. If you are unsure how these scores connect to how your student performs in the classroom, please ask the assessor as well as the general education teacher and special education teacher for more information.

### **Were observations done? What were the results?**

Classroom observations may be conducted as a part of the eligibility process. During the observations, the observer looks to see what strategies, accommodations, and supports are already in the classroom; the student's response in the classroom; any difficulties the student may be having; and any strengths the student may be demonstrating. The results of the evaluation can be included in the Analyzing Existing Data section or in individual evaluation reports.

### **When should I receive the eligibility determination documents?**

You should receive any evaluations of your child at least 10 school days prior to the eligibility meeting. This will allow you to meaningfully participate in the discussion regarding your child's potential eligibility for special education services.

### **What happens if my child is not eligible for special education services?**

At an eligibility determination meeting, the team decides whether your child qualifies for special education services. During the meeting, other strategies and supports addressing the reason for referral can be provided by individuals on the IEP team. If your child does not qualify for special education services, the school can also provide information for other options to support your child. This could mean a continuation of the Response to Intervention process, community resources, further intervention, tutoring, a 504 plan, or other supports to ensure your child is receiving what they need.

### **How might this process be impacted during virtual learning periods?**

While DCPS is working to ensure that all services which can be provided virtually continue without delay, eligibility determinations may be delayed if in-person assessments or observations are needed. DCPS will continue to keep families informed as health and safety requirements change and as increased virtual opportunities become available. [Refer to OSSE's July 2020 IDEA, Part B Provision of FAPE Guidance.](#)



# What to look for in an IEP

This section will help you understand more about the individualized education program (IEP), as well as what DCPS is doing differently to ensure support of your child's needs during virtual learning periods.

The key sections of the IEP are:

- Student Information
- Present Levels of Performance and Annual Goals
- Special Education and Related Services
- Classroom Accommodations and Statewide or Alternate Assessment Participation
- Transition Plan (for students age 14 and up)

## Student Information:

When reviewing your child's IEP, it is important to ensure your child's school information is correct and up to date (address, phone number, date of birth, etc.). The school uses this information to contact you if there are any questions or concerns.

## Present Levels of Performance and Annual Goals:

When developing annual goals for your child, the IEP team will:

- Use baseline data to support present levels of performance. Baseline data is a way of measuring how your child is currently performing on a specific skill or standard. Baseline data can come from a variety of places: standardized tests, observations, classroom-based assessments, student work samples or statewide testing results.
- Ensure that the IEP states measurable academic, related service and/or functional goals for your child. Goals may be carried over from a previous IEP but they may increase in difficulty level. Additionally, if your child has mastered a goal with adult support it may carry over with a focus on independent work.

Each goal on your child's IEP will:

- List a baseline of your child's current level of performance,
- List the expected level of achievement within one IEP year, and
- Indicate how progress will be measured and how often data will be collected. Progress can be measured informally or formally:
  - Informal measurements can include work samples, verbal responses, answers to weekly reading comprehension quizzes and information from behavior data sheets.
  - Formal measurements can include standardized achievement tests, rating scales, intervention monitoring reports, and state test results.



### **Special Education and Related Services**

In your child's IEP, there is a section dedicated to special education and related services which identifies the services your child receives, the setting in which each service is provided, and the frequency of each service. This lets the IEP team know what services are required to fully support your child in school.

### **Classroom Accommodations and Statewide or Alternate Assessment Participation**

This section identifies accommodations and/or modifications required to support your child in the classroom. Types of accommodations and modifications may include:

- Preferential seating,
- Extended time,
- Frequent breaks,
- Clarification or repetition of directions,
- Enlarged print material, and
- Read aloud.

### **Transition Plan:**

Transition plans are developed for students ages 14 and older to prepare them for life after high school. The transition plan includes:

- Age-appropriate assessment data,
- Your child's academic, functional, and employment interests,
- Your child's strengths and needs,
- Annual transition goals reflecting what your child will work on during the course of the school year,
- Long term transition goals which include what your child would like to do after they graduate from high school

### **Individualized Distance Learning Plan:**

The Individualized Distance Learning Plan is developed in collaboration with parents and teachers. It describes how the IEP will be implemented during periods of remote or hybrid learning. The plan includes:

- Description of instructional delivery
- Method for service delivery
- Plan for parent communication

# Questions about your child's IEP

## What does family engagement look like between IEP meetings?

Families may consider connecting with their child's teachers throughout the school year through their preferred method of communication (email, phone calls, conferences etc.) to check in on student progress. You should receive an IEP progress report quarterly with your child's report card. If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding your child's services, present levels of performance, or goals, you can always contact a member of the IEP team to ask questions or to schedule a team meeting.

## How can I support my child with their IEP goals outside of their classroom?

There are a variety of ways to support your child at home with their IEP goals. You can reach out to your child's teachers and/or related service providers regarding specific activities, strategies, or supports you can implement outside of the classroom.

Other ways you can support your child include:

- Talking to your child about their disability and how to advocate for their needs,
- Working on self-advocacy and self-direction skills,
- Having open and honest discussions about your child's future goals,
- Having your child participate in activities with same-aged peers, and
- Encouraging your child to find a part-time or summer-time job that aligns with their skills and interests.

## How do my child's teachers and related service providers work together?

Teachers and related service providers work collaboratively to support your child. These collaborative efforts include meeting to discuss strategies and supports for your child in the classroom as well as sharing your child's progress, accommodations, and modifications in between IEP meetings. Special education teachers, general education teachers, and related service providers can co-plan to ensure your child receives instruction aligned to their needs in their least restrictive environment.

## What should I do if I have concerns about my child's progress?

It can be concerning to hear that your child is not making progress or regressing on their IEP goals. If this is occurring, it can be helpful to contact your child's special education teacher to discuss options. You can request a meeting so the IEP team can come together to re-evaluate your child's services, supports, accommodations, and modifications to ensure that they are getting the support they need to be successful.

## What are the indicators that services need to be updated or changed?

Indicators can include:

- Formal and informal assessment results indicating growth,
- Mastering skills,
- Generalizing skills into the classroom,
- Plateau of skills with consistent intervention being provided over an extended period, and
- Limited or no progress observed.

Any changes or updates to services are an IEP team decision and all data sources would need to be reviewed as a part of the process.



# How will I know my child is making progress?

## How is my child's progress measured?

Progress is measured in a variety of ways by teachers and related service providers, including student work samples, quizzes, tests, and other formal and informal assessments. For students age 14 and above, secondary transition progress is measured by the level of independence the student demonstrates.

During every IEP meeting, there should be a discussion regarding the progress your child has made since the last IEP meeting. Your child's annual goals will be updated based on their progress and mastery of the previous year's goals, as well as the current needs of your child. These goals provide focus for the next year and ensure your child is being challenged academically.

Throughout the school year you could also:

- Attend parent-teacher conferences and school-based activities.
- Request data related to your child's progress from your child's teachers and related service providers. If you suspect a problem or deficit, you should ask your child's teacher to assess your child using classroom assessments to quantify how your student is progressing.
- Request to meet with the social worker to go over your child's behavior plan. The purpose of this is to see that their behavior supports are working and, if not, to modify those plans and interventions whenever there is a suspected issue or concern.

## How is progress measured in high school students' career-based learning experiences?

An objective of transition programming is to understand the impact of each career-based learning experience on students' attitudes, skills and confidence in professional settings. Students are surveyed anonymously to encourage honesty in responses, and most importantly, to compare students' pre- and post-program skills with their post-program results and aptitudes.

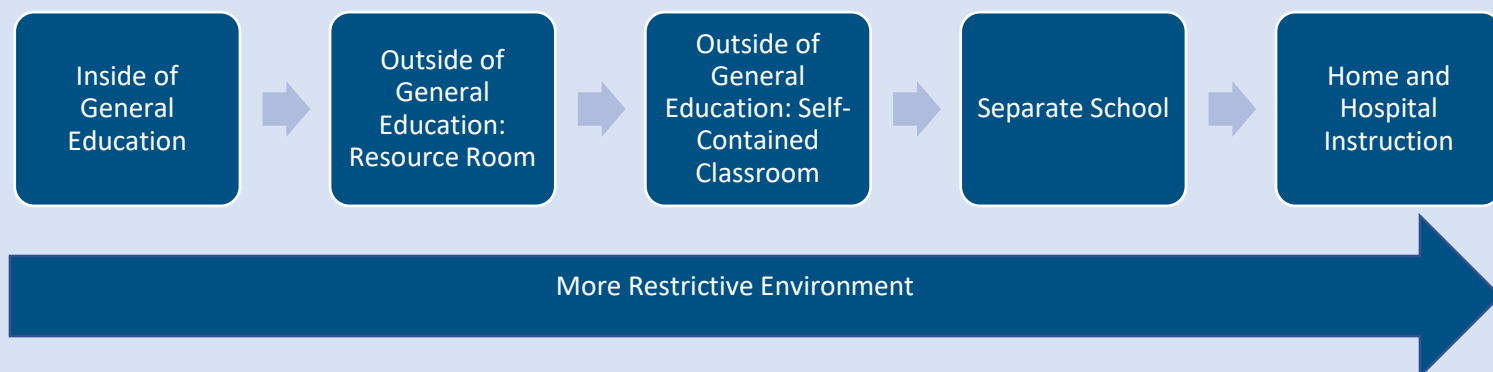
## How does the IEP progress report relate to my child's report card?

IEP progress reports are documents written quarterly, like report cards, to provide you with updates on how your child is progressing toward their IEP goals. These goals are connected to specific standards, like report cards, but have a different grading model.

For each IEP goal, the progress report will indicate whether:

- Your child has mastered the goal,
- Your child is progressing toward meeting the goal,
- Your child has made no progress toward the goal,
- Your child is regressing,
- Or the goal has not yet been introduced.

## Where are special education services provided?



DCPS provides a continuum of services for students ages three through 22 with disabilities who have been found eligible to receive special education services. There are different settings along the continuum where these services can be provided, and students learn in the least restrictive environment possible.

IEP teams determine the appropriate level of services a student needs to access the curriculum. Students with disabilities spend as much time as possible with their peers who are non-disabled, as determined by the IEP team. Within each child's IEP, accommodations and/or modifications are listed and provide clear ways to make the general education curriculum accessible for them. Accommodations change how a student learns the material.

A modification changes what a student is taught or expected to learn. Most DCPS students can be served in the general education (regular) classroom, in a Resource Room or in a self-contained classroom. Separate school and home and hospital instruction are considered the most restrictive environments and are for students with the highest level of need.

During hybrid or virtual learning, special education teachers will provide core instruction alongside general education teachers for students who receive specialized instruction inside of general education. Special education teachers may pull students who require specialized instruction hours outside of general education into a separate virtual learning space to provide support. Students who receive full-time hours outside of general education in a self-contained educational setting will continue to receive those services in a virtual environment with special education staff. Students' IEPs may have instruction hours provided only inside of general education, only outside of general education, or both inside and outside of general education.

**Inside of general education** refers to specialized instruction and related services provided while students with disabilities are with students who are non-disabled in the general classroom. DCPS believes that all students will benefit from including students with disabilities in a general education setting to the greatest extent possible. Examples of how services can be provided inside of general education include:

### Consultation

In the consultation model, general education teachers consult with special education teachers to develop lessons aligned to students' IEP goals. Related service providers consult with general education teachers on strategies and modifications to support access to lessons and instruction. The general education teacher then delivers the instruction.

### Co-Teaching

For the purposes of specialized instruction, co-teaching is a service delivery option that exists to provide specialized instruction services to students with disabilities in the general education setting. Co-teaching occurs when two or more certified teachers, one of whom is licensed in special education, share the responsibility for teaching some or all students in a classroom. This practice provides all students with an opportunity to learn from two educators in an integrated approach to the content.

Sometimes, though, a student needs more support than can be provided inside the general education setting.

**Outside of general education** refers to all specialized instruction and services that are provided to a class or grouping made up entirely of students with disabilities. Students with fewer than 20 hours of specialized instruction outside of general education in their IEPs typically receive services in a resource room.

### **Resource Room**

Resource rooms are a separate setting, outside of the general education classroom, where special education services are delivered. Individual needs are supported in resource rooms as defined by the students' IEP. The student receiving this type of support will have some support in the resource room and some support in the general education classroom.

DCPS's self-contained, districtwide classrooms provide specialized supports to students with 20 or more hours of specialized instruction outside of general education in their IEP. Our self-contained classrooms are designed to give more support to students with disabilities who have a high level of need.

### **Self-Contained Programs**

Self-contained special education classrooms are highly structured and supportive with low student to staff ratios. All classrooms are staffed with certified special education teachers and instructional paraprofessionals. Academic instruction is aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the DCPS Scope and Sequence. Some students access the general education curriculum, while others are provided with a modified curriculum. In all classes, interventions supplement the general education curriculum and the modified curriculum. Specially trained and certified related service providers support the needs of the students in accordance with their IEP. Some students participate in the standard state assessment with accommodations, while others participate in alternate state assessments.

High school students in self-contained programs have the opportunity to either work toward a diploma or a certificate of IEP completion. The students, and their IEP team must decide whether a standard high school diploma or certificate of IEP completion is appropriate. The decision must be made no later than the annual IEP team meeting held when the student enters ninth grade or is 14 years old.

**Students who receive full-time hours outside of general education in a self-contained educational setting will continue to receive those services in a virtual environment with special education staff.**

*\*Please see Appendix for a sample student schedule.*



## Self-Contained Program Types:

**Behavior & Education Support (BES):** Supports students who have been identified with an emotional disability or who have challenging behaviors and require a more therapeutic environment.

[dcps.bes@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.bes@k12.dc.gov)

**Communication & Education Support (CES):** Supports students who have been identified with an autism spectrum disorder or other learning need and require the use of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) in the classroom.

[dcps.ces@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.ces@k12.dc.gov)

**Early Learning Support (ELS):** Provides full-time, early intervention for students with developmental delays or other health impairments. Some students demonstrate delays in cognition, communication, and motor skills.

[dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov)

**Independence & Learning Support (ILS):** Supports students who have been identified as having a cognitive or intellectual disability.

[dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov)

**Medical & Education Support (MES):** Supports students who have been identified with complex medical needs and intellectual or cognitive delays.

[dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov)

**Vision Programs (Sensory Support):** Provides supports and instruction that targets the unique challenges experienced by students who are blind or have low vision.

[dcps.sensorysupport@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.sensorysupport@k12.dc.gov)

**Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHOH) (Sensory Support):** Provides supports and instruction that targets the unique challenges experienced by students who are deaf/hard of hearing.

[dcps.sensorysupport@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.sensorysupport@k12.dc.gov)

**Specific Learning Support (SLS):** Supports students who have been identified with a specific learning disability or other disability where behavior is not the primary impediment to accessing the general education curriculum.

[dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov)

DCPS also supports students through the Home and Hospital Instruction and Extended School Year Programs.

### Home and Hospital Instruction (HHIP)

Serves students who have medical or behavioral health conditions that keep them at home or a hospital and prevent them from attending school.

[hip.dcps@k12.dc.gov](mailto:hip.dcps@k12.dc.gov)

### Extended School Year (ESY)

ESY refers to special education and/or related services provided to a student with a disability beyond the traditional school year. DCPS offers a summer program to help students retain skills that are essential to their progress, so they are ready to begin school in the fall.

[dcps.esy@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.esy@k12.dc.gov)

## Location of Services (LOS)

The purpose of the DSI Location Process is to facilitate changes in program location to ensure timely services for students with disabilities who have IEPs with 20 or more hours outside of the general education setting. DSI program managers monitor program capacity, determine appropriate service locations based on the student's home address and help ensure special education services are implemented for students.

### **What if a family wants a different Location of Services?**

Families may reach out to the Program Manager for the specific program in which a student receives services. Refer to the "Academic Programs" section of this guide for contact information. For general questions about LOS, please the Division of Specialized Instruction (DSI) at [dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.specialed@k12.dc.gov).

### **What if a child requires transportation?**

Transportation is a related service. Once it is determined that a student will require transportation services to access free and appropriate education, the current school LEA Representative will add the request in the transportation system managed by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). These services are intended to transport special education students who are not attending their neighborhood school.



### **What if a student receives a seat at a school through the My School DC Lottery?**

DCPS Division of Specialized Instruction will make every effort to accommodate enrollment at the school selected through the lottery process. DSI reserves one seat in each program classroom throughout the district for students who elect to participate in the My School DC Lottery. However, it is important to note that not every school has every type of full-time program. Thus, a lottery outcome does not necessarily guarantee a seat for a student in a self-contained special education program.

### **When will families hear about a Location of Services for the upcoming school year?**

Families will hear about the following school year's LOS in the April-May timeframe if a student is changing schools.

### **Can families tour the proposed school?**

Yes! We encourage all families to tour their new school and participate in a transition meeting between their current school and the new school.

### **Who should families speak to if they have questions about a child's new school?**

The location of service letter contains specific contact information for the LEA representative's designee of the child's new LOS. Families should feel free to reach out to that individual with any questions or to schedule a tour.



# Secondary Transition Programs

Contact: [OSI.Transition@k12.dc.gov](mailto:OSI.Transition@k12.dc.gov)

Secondary Transition is the process of preparing students for life after they leave high school, including participation in post-secondary education or training, employment, and community living. Secondary transition training begins in pre-kindergarten, with the ultimate outcome of students living independently based on their preferences, abilities and limitations.

Upon entering high school, students and their IEP team must decide whether a standard high school diploma or special education certificate is an appropriate program of study. The graduation pathway decision must be made no later than the annual IEP team meeting held when the student enters the ninth grade or is 14 years old. The decision to allow a student to pursue a standard high school diploma or a special education certificate may be changed at any time to align with a student's academic progress. The IEP team must make every effort to provide students with the opportunity to earn a standard high school diploma.

## Transition Services During Virtual Learning Periods

All secondary transition programs will proceed in a virtual setting. Students enrolled in workforce development programs or participating in internship programs will receive job development services and work-readiness training virtually. Referrals to adult disability services (RSA and DDA) will also happen virtually with students and families completing the application process electronically. Students and families will receive support from their school, as well as the DCPS Workforce Development Coordinator or Job Placement Specialist.

## Secondary Transition Programs

**ESY Transition Academy:** The Extended School Year (ESY) Transition Academy summer program is a blended instructional model that focuses on the recoupment of skill regression and the development critical secondary transition skills such as self-advocacy and self-determination for secondary students ages 14 – 22 years old. The ESY Transition Academy will prepare students with disabilities for transition into DCPS workforce development programs.

**Competitive Employment Opportunities (CEO) Program:** The Competitive Employment Opportunities (CEO) program is a premier mentoring and internship opportunity for students with disabilities. During the spring semester, students are paired with mentors based on common career interests. Students continue to work with mentors over the summer by engaging in an 80-hour paid internship at their mentor's workplace to apply skills gained in the CEO program.

**General Explorations (GE) Workforce Initiative:** Connects classroom-based job readiness instruction to internship experiences for students enrolled in the General Explorations transition course. Internship placements are aligned to students' IEP transition plan post-secondary employment goals.

**Workforce Development Initiative (WDI) School Program (all students/internships = 80):** Supports students with disabilities who receive their academic services within a self-contained classroom. This program is available at all comprehensive DCPS high schools with self-contained academic program classes.

## Workforce Development Programs

**Project SEARCH:** Project SEARCH (PS) is a "school-to-work" application only, one-year internship program that prepares DCPS adult students with intellectual disabilities ages 18 – 21 years old for competitive employment in the hospitality and tourism industry. Students are fully immersed in a workplace setting receiving hands-on work experiences at one of five local Hilton Worldwide partner hotels. Interns receive daily instruction on professionalism and employability skills. The application period for the PS program opens in January and closes in March.



**Workforce Development Center at River Terrace EC:** The Workforce Development Center (WDC) is an application only, one-year internship program that prepares DCPS adult students with intellectual and disabilities ages 18 – 21 years old for competitive employment in the community. The program model is a blend of classroom instruction and community-based work experiences to reinforce learning and skill development. The WDC program offers specialized training in the fields of horticulture, health services, and hospitality and tourism. The application period for the WDC program opens in January and closes in March.

# Assistive Technology (AT)

Contact: [dcps.assistivetech@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.assistivetech@k12.dc.gov)

Assistive Technology (AT) is a term that includes low- to high-tech supports that help students to complete tasks that they are unable to complete without the additional support. AT does not replace instruction, but rather, maintains or improves access within an area of need, such as reading, writing, communication, and mathematics, or access to the physical environment. AT is not a specific device (i.e. iPad, Chromebook, laptop) but access to specific features such as text to speech, dictation, word prediction, graphic organizers, and language systems, that support access to the curriculum. IEP teams are required to consider AT at each annual IEP meeting. AT may also be a reasonable accommodation under Section 504.

All students with disabilities are eligible for assistive technology, therefore, formal evaluations are not required to determine if a student is eligible for AT supports. Rather, the AT decision-making process is a process that your child's team will engage in to determine the most appropriate AT tool or support for the area of need. You and your child's team will use a collaborative process, called the Student, Environment, Task, and Tools (SETT) framework. If the school-based team requires support during this process, the team may collaborate with the central-based assistive technology team for the areas of learning, access, and communication. For assistive technology tools for hearing and vision, school-teams should contact the Audiology and Vision departments, respectively.

Students who require access to their dedicated AT technology at home during periods of virtual learning must have a signed AT Home Use Agreement on file. Parents should contact their school special education administrator for additional information.

The types of assistive technology are:

- **Access:** AT for access allows students to access their classrooms, environment, and materials. Assistive technology for access includes devices and tools for seating, positioning, and accessing materials (ex: a switch to access a communication device). These solutions enable students to sit more closely with their peers, navigate their school with greater independence, and access classroom materials. Examples include gait trainers, activities chairs, eye-gaze systems, and switches.  
*\*Please note that wheelchairs and other medical supports are not included in the role of the school-based Assistive Technology Team, these items fall into the category of durable medical equipment (DME).*
- **Communication:** AT for communication, also known as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), helps students communicate with staff and other students and participate in classes. Examples of AT for communication include low-tech communication boards and picture symbols, communication applications, and dedicated communication devices.
- **Hearing:** AT for hearing includes a variety of assistive listening systems or hearing technology that can help students who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as those with other auditory and learning problems. Auditory listening systems can reduce background noise and amplify the teacher's voice. In DCPS, the educational audiologist collaborates with the team to determine the hearing assistive technology needs.  
*\*Please note that hearing aids are not included in the role of the school-based audiology team. The dispensing of hearing aids is completed by audiologists in medical settings.*
- **Learning:** AT for learning includes assistive technology features that increases a student's independence in reading, writing, and math as well as executive functioning. Examples include text to speech, speech to text, graphic organizers, checklists, and word prediction.
- **Vision:** AT for vision includes supports and equipment for students who are blind or visually impaired that need some form of assistive technology in order access print on paper or electronic information. In DCPS, the vision specialist collaborates with the team to determine the vision assistive technology needs.

## Related Services

Contact: [dcps.relatedservices@k12.dc.gov](mailto:dcps.relatedservices@k12.dc.gov)

Often, children with disabilities need additional support and services to help them succeed in the classroom. Some students with disabilities only require specialized instruction by a teacher to adapt the curriculum to that child's needs. Other times, students receive specific related services to support classroom instruction.

During virtual/hybrid learning, related services may be provided through direct services using videoconferencing, phone conferencing, co-treatment with another provider or co-teaching with the special education teacher. Parent consultation and the delivery of home extension activities are provided as part of indirect services during virtual/hybrid learning. Each student with related services will have an individualized distance learning plan outlining the method, mode, frequency and duration for the current IEP services and goals.

Parent will be asked to sign a Medicaid Consent for Telehealth Services form when creating the individualized distance learning plan.

Types of Related Services:

- **Educational Audiology:** Educational Audiology focuses on the hearing, listening, and auditory processing challenges that may affect a student's academic, communication, and/or social skills. Audiologists support students by evaluating their hearing and auditory processing ability and selecting and fitting appropriate amplification technology. [speech.audiology@k12.dc.gov](mailto:speech.audiology@k12.dc.gov)
- **Mental Health and Behavioral Support:** The Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services team consists of DCPS social workers who work with students on issues they face at school, at home, and in the community, that affect their ability to participate in and benefit from their education. These services can include group or individual counseling; home visits; and social, emotional and behavioral assessments. [School.mentalhealth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:School.mentalhealth@k12.dc.gov)
- **Occupational Therapy:** Occupational therapy practitioners support a child's participation in activities throughout the school day. School-based practitioners support academic achievement and social participation by promoting occupation within all school routines, including recess, classroom, and cafeteria time. [Dcps.OTPTtherapyprogram@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Dcps.OTPTtherapyprogram@k12.dc.gov)
- **Physical Therapy:** Physical therapists are health care professionals who help individuals maintain, restore, and improve movement, activity, and functioning, thereby enabling optimal performance and enhancing health, well-being, and quality of life. The physical therapist performs therapeutic interventions, including compensation, remediation and prevention strategies and adaptations, focusing on functional mobility and safe, efficient access and participation in activities and routines in natural learning environments. [Dcps.OTPTtherapyprogram@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Dcps.OTPTtherapyprogram@k12.dc.gov)
- **Psychology:** The psychologist supports students and educators by giving psychological and developmental tests, analyzing information about a child's behavior and cognitive functioning, and interpreting these results with school staff and parents. [School.MentalHealth@k12.dc.gov](mailto:School.MentalHealth@k12.dc.gov)
- **Speech-Language Pathology:** The speech-language pathologist identifies and supports children with specific disorders and delays related to oral language and communication. Speech-Language pathologists use current intervention techniques and strategies to help students become more independent. [speech.audiology@k12.dc.gov](mailto:speech.audiology@k12.dc.gov)

# Section 504 Program

Contact: [504@k12.dc.gov](mailto:504@k12.dc.gov)

The Section 504 program is named for Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law that requires public schools to provide accommodations to students with disabilities so that these students can access the school's general education curriculum and learning opportunities.

Unlike special education, Section 504 does not prescribe specialized instruction for eligible students. Instead, the Section 504 program ensures that eligible students with disabilities receive the accommodations and/or services they need to access the general education curriculum and other opportunities for learning at their DCPS schools.

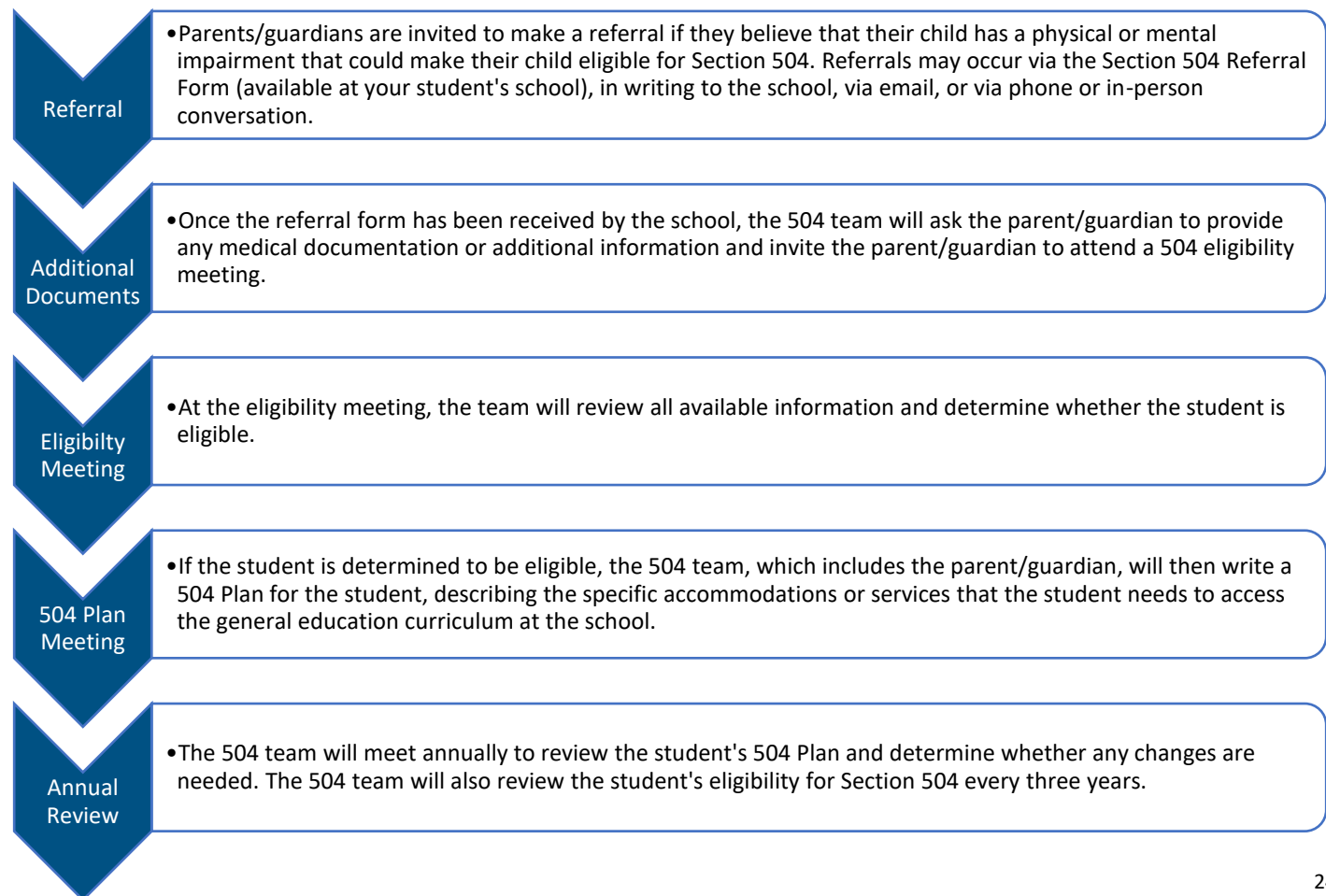
## Eligibility:

A student is eligible under Section 504 if all three of the below are met:

- The student has a physical or mental impairment, that substantially limits a major life activity.

Eligibility determinations are made by the 504 team at your student's school.

## Process for Section 504:



## Appendix

Example of a possible schedule for students with IEPs during virtual instruction periods:

SPED Self-Contained	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
8:30-9:00	Morning Meeting		Morning Meeting			Tracking the provision of Specialized Instruction Services	Morning Meeting		Morning Meeting	
9:00-10:00	ELA Whole Group Instructional Block <i>(shown as 1 block but likely distributed throughout day)</i>		Math Whole Group Instructional Block <i>(shown as 1 block but likely distributed throughout day)</i>		Inner Core		ELA Whole Group Instructional Block <i>(shown as 1 block but likely distributed throughout day)</i>		Math Whole Group Instructional Block <i>(shown as 1 block but likely distributed throughout day)</i>	
10:00-10:30	1 on 1 Direct Instruction	Asynchronous Learning	Math Small Group		Planning and Progress Monitoring		ELA Small Group		1 on 1 Direct Instruction	Asynchronous Learning
10:30-11:00	ELA/ Related Services		Asynchronous Learning				Asynchronous Learning		Math / Related Services	
11:00-11:30	ELA Small Group		1 on 1 Direct Instruction	Asynchronous Learning	Co-planning with General Ed		1 on 1 Direct Instruction	Asynchronous Learning	Math Small Group	
11:30-12:00	Inner Core		/ Related Services		Co-planning with RSPS		/ Related Services		Asynchronous Learning	
12:00-12:45	Lunch		Lunch and Recess		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch	
12:45-1:00	Movement/Lunch Bunch		Movement/Lunch Bunch		LEAP		Movement/Lunch Bunch		Movement/Lunch Bunch	
1:00-2:00	Social Studies Whole Group Instruction Social Skills Block		Science Whole Group Instruction and Social Skills Block				Social Studies Whole Group Instruction and Social Skills Block		Science Whole Group Instruction and Social Skills Block	
2:00-2:30	1 on 1 Direct Instruction with families/ Related Services		1 on 1 Direct Instruction with families/ Related Services				1 on 1 Direct Instruction with families / Related Services		1 on 1 Direct Instruction with families/ Related Services	
2:30-3:00										
3:00 – 4:00	Planning		Planning				Planning		Planning	